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commentary on precious methods and affections.

Mr. Fontaine's edition, if we rightly understand him, is intended to reach a younger class of students. This we conclude from the large amount of translation contained in the notes (fifteen pp.), and consists frequently of an English so simple that the distorted exaggeration of the *Précieuse* phrasing seems often lost to the detriment of the humor of the piece. Otherwise his notes are well adapted to be of literary value to instructor and class. Mr. Fontaine has, however, chosen to disregard the historical setting of the piece which I deem so important. He includes Voltaire's "Notice sur les *Précieuses Ridicules*" and Molière's own dubious preface without comment however.

He has but two pages of introductory matter that is his own—and that rather informal—containing the following statement which is surely misleading to undergraduates, to say the least: "Mascarille is the *faithful image* (the italics are mine) of the young courtiers that filled the court of Louis XIV."

The statement seems to me unrelieved by anything in the context, yet I hardly think Mr. Fontaine would seriously maintain that the rowdy Mascarille (dressed for a buffoon part, originally even to the wearing of a mask—by the author himself—and still an extravagant drôle in the modified latter-day performances of the *Comédie Française*) could be the *faithful image* of any sane man save through grossest caricature.

Assuming this second edition to be adapted for younger students, we can readily understand the omission of Mascarille's famous, line "Je vais vous montrer une furieuse pluie," with the indicated gesture which is indeed hopelessly vulgar for any age. Yet Mr. Fontaine must have sacrificed unwillingly so valuable an historical side-light.

Both editions would be decidedly more serviceable for the addition of a vocabulary. This convenience has been, I believe, frequently advocated in these pages but seldom with more justice than now. The "*Précieuses*" abounds in words distorted from their natural to special *Précieuse* meanings, some words and phrases having been coined expressly for

the *Société*, and used exclusively by them. These meanings are subtle and difficult for any but a specialist to reach. Mr. Fontaine has aimed at this in his notes in a greater degree than Mr. Toy.

Both books are well printed and are attractive in form and size.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—The "International Correspondence" has now, in the four years of its existence, made great progress in England, France and Germany, and, to some extent, in the United States. Mr. W. T. Stead, Editor of the *Review of Reviews*, in London, has offered one hundred prizes, consisting of books in the languages foreign to the recipients, to be awarded to those students who have made the greatest proficiency in this part of their modern language study. Thirty of these go to each of the European countries most engaged in the correspondence; England, France and Germany, and ten come to the United States. If each teacher, in school or college where the International Correspondence has been introduced, will send to our committee the name of the student considered "the most deserving as regards continuance in regular, careful correspondence, and general character" as soon as possible, we shall be glad to give such student an opportunity to compete for one of the ten American prizes.

The teacher should, in each case, state the reasons on which he bases his conclusion, and send also *two* specimens of letters written by the student in the foreign language, without direct assistance of his instructor.

The competition will close February 1st, 1901, but may be extended two weeks.

Also, will all teachers who have introduced the International Correspondence into their classes, whether they desire to compete for the prizes or not, send their address, with the full name of their institutions, to the chairman of this committee, and state how long the International Correspondence has been introduced, and the number of students now engaged in it. An early report upon this subject is earnestly requested.

EDWARD H. MAGILL,

Chairman of the International Correspondence
Committee of the Mod. Lang. Asso'n of
America.

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OLD FRENCH LITERATURE.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

DEAR SIR:—*The Round Table before Wace*, is a monograph including pages 182-205 of the *Harvard Studies*. The author aims to show that Wace is speaking the truth in the *Roman de Brut* (vv. 9998-9) where the poet refers his account of King Arthur's Round Table to Celtic tradition. In view of the silence of Welsh literature and Geoffrey of Monmouth's omission of any reference, Wace's statement has been rejected by a number of scholars as unreliable.

To vindicate the Norman poet—the first writer to mention the Round Table—and also to support the view of a Celtic origin, the author turns to the *Brut* of Layamon. He argues, from the peculiarly barbarian color of Layamon's Round Table story, unusual with the poet, who rather takes pains to tone down coarse detail elsewhere, that it must represent a native Welsh tale familiar to Layamon by reason of his close contact with Wales.

writers. From such accounts as the *Story of*

¹ Reprinted from Vol. VII of *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*. Published under the direction of the Modern Language Departments of Harvard University. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1900.

As evidence, further, that Layamon did not invent the episode of the Round Table, which he added to Wace, and the incidental quarrels over precedence at feasts, a number of examples are cited from ancient Irish saga *Mac Datho's Pig* and *The Feast of Bricriu* marked resemblance is shown with Layamon's tale sufficient to admit this latter into the circle of primitive Welsh story.

The author recognizes the objection that, although the Round Table is a Pan-Celtic institution, as he maintains from the Irish sources just given and from the Greek historian Posidonius as well, its connection with Arthur may have been late and first made in Armorica. His reply is the difficulty of supposing a Round Table without an Arthur to give the tradition fixity. Some hero must have presided and the Celts had but one. The treatise is concise, not to say brief, containing very full notes and references and, as an exposition of proof is well ordered.

F. L. CRITCHLOW.

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BRIEF MENTION.

THE educational reform movement in Germany has scored some important points in the past year. Last May a meeting at Berlin, of philologists and others connected with or interested in higher instruction, adopted and submitted to the government the following resolutions: first, that all graduates of *Mittelschulen* with nine years' courses (*Gymnasien*, *Realgymnasien*, and *Ober-Realschulen*) should be on a footing of equality with regard to the pursuit of higher scientific and professional studies, notably those of medicine and law, for which at present a *Gymnasium* preparation or its equivalent (with prescribed Greek) is required; and second, that the *Mittelschulen* in question should be reorganized so as to offer, in the first three years, a uniform course of study without Latin, thus